

CHARIVARIA.

AMERICANS would do well to note that the British way, when a Commission of Enquiry is appointed, is to temper justice with MERSEY.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN has published a pamphlet entitled "The New Spirit in Ireland." We had always imagined that its whiskey would brook no rivals.

The story of MR. LE QUEUX's "The Invasion of 1910" is, we read, to be reproduced by cinematograph, and with two endings—one favourable for Great Britain, and another equally favourable for Germany. Something surely might be done to allay the war feeling in both countries if Britain Victorious were shown in Germany, and Germany Victorious in Britain.

The Army airship *Gamma* made an excellent flight last week from Farnborough round St. Paul's Cathedral and back. Long may it be before she changes her name to *Digamma*.

The fight between our English Spas for the patronage of the public promises to be very keen this year. In the first round, to judge by the reports in *The Daily Mail*, Buxton

would seem to have scored over her rivals. Buxton, it appears, has been enjoying "climatic conditions," while Cheltenham, Droitwich, Llandrindod Wells, Malvern and Matlock have merely had weather.

Among the exhibits shown at the Nursing Exhibition at the Horticultural Hall is a perambulator which can be folded up. This is a capital idea. There is nothing a nurse dislikes so much, when a baby has been kidnapped during her flirtation with the Guardsman, as to be seen wheeling the empty perambulator home.

A jackdaw, *The Express* tells us, visits the British Museum daily to feast on the eggs of the pigeons that nest over the portico; and the pigeons, we hear, are beginning to complain bitterly of the supineness of the police.

"SOLDIERS IN A KENNEL" announces a paragraph in *The Mail*. It looks as if somebody had forgotten to let loose the dogs of war.

The case of a labelled crab that walked ninety-eight miles is mentioned in a report presented to the Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee. It is thought that the poor creature, maddened by the chaff of its friends, travelled this distance in order to escape their feeble jests about the label.

A woman arrested in Lippa, Hungary, has confessed to the murder of four of her husbands. As a husband ourselves we may be permitted to express the hope that this horrible hobby will not

From Shanghai it is reported that a new method of executing prisoners now prevails in the Province of Chekaing. Instead of being beheaded, criminals are now first chloroformed and then shot. As a result of this improvement in local conditions, criminals are said to be flocking to the neighbourhood.

FASHION NOTE.—"Father," asked the child, "what are 'panniers'?" "Things, my son," the parent answered, "that donkeys wear."

"FLODDEN FIELD REMAINS" is the heading of a paragraph in *The Pall Mall Gazette*. With so many American curiosity-hunters in the field we are glad to hear this statement.



Dorothy (spending her holidays on the French coast). "D'YOU KNOW, ERIC, THAT'S THE FIRST PERSON WHO'S SPOKE REAL ENGLISH SINCE WE'VE COME."

spread. We are all the more nervous as we are told that ladies are at last showing signs of getting tired of Bridge.

Both Italy and Turkey, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* states, have given presents to the Palace of Peace at the Hague. Their presence there would have been even more acceptable.

One great advantage of the new Campanile at Venice being an exact replica of the old one is, the proprietor of an illustrated paper tells us, that one can use an old block instead of having to have a new one made.

The Chairman of the Cheshire Education Committee complains that spelling is getting uncommonly bad all over the country. On the other hand, this may prove the spread of spelling reform.

THE REBEL.

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A bold bad man whose whole life was an exercise in revolt. When he entered a shop or establishment with swing doors, one of which was lettered "Pull" and the other "Push," he pushed the one which he should have pulled, and on leaving he pulled the one which he should have pushed. Wherever it was forbidden he walked on the grass and threw orange peel on the pavement. He smoked

in the tube lifts. On railway journeys in England he put heavy articles on the hat-rack and his feet on the cushions, and got out before the train stopped; while on railway journeys in France he always "penché-d himself *au dehors*." Yet when he came to die he had just as nice a tombstone as anybody else.

Commercial Acumen ;
OR THE SECRET OF SUCCESSFUL COAL-MINING.

"The Kent Collieries Company, realizing that the only way to get coal in commercial quantities is to make a pit wide enough for the miners to go down and for the coal to be brought to the surface, has put the larger part of its effort into the commercial side of its enterprise."

"*The Times*" Financial Supplement.

"'Billy's Statagem' is a film so clear and steady that it is almost possible to imagine it as a fixture, except for the moving figures."

Eastbourne Gazette. Those in the know tell us that the idea of moving figures is really the secret of the popularity of the kinema.

BONES OF CONTENTION.

No. II.

"If," said my wife with tearful asperity, "you wish to ruin the dog's character and degrade his point of view you are going the right way to work."

"My dear," I returned with characteristic moderation, "I am adopting a method approved by reason and experience. Nothing else will teach him."

"And it simply means that I have to take him straight up to the bath-room and wash his nose!"

"If your conscience imposes that obligation you are doubtless right to perform it." I tried to speak without bitterness.

My wife took the dog on her lap.

"Poor darling," she said, "you were born to unhappiness, and I confirmed that destiny when I christened you."

This was distinctly a hit at me. The dog is four months old and she called him Hymen; picturesquely enough, because he was born on our wedding day. I assumed my wounded expression which, in days gone by, I have known to prove exceedingly effective.

"There is no reason," I said, "why Hymen should not be the happiest of dogs, but if, like the rest of the world, he resents a little wholesome discipline—or you do for him—he will naturally become discontented."

"I don't suppose," returned my wife, meditatively addressing the dog, "that you will ever forget the beating he gave you when you woke him up by barking at the milkman."

Hymen looked up at her and deliberately blinked a tear from one of his large yellow eyes on to his nose. I have always deeply resented in him a tendency to work the "poor dumb animal" turn at inappropriate moments.

"If it is your desire that an innocent milkman should be attacked," I began with some bitterness.

My wife extended her thumb and forefinger and held up Hymen by the scruff of his neck. "Attacked!" she sniffed.

I decided to abandon that point for the moment. "Of course I know," I pursued sarcastically, "that it is quite unreasonable to indulge in feelings of resentment when one finds one's hair-brushes on the door-mat with half the bristles chawed off."

"As if," retorted my wife, "I had not solemnly warned you never to leave chair near your dressing-table. Besides, he was more than adequately punished for that; he suffered tortures while I pulled the bristles out of his throat."

"Then if only he would confine himself to one pair of my boots," I added, "but he can't bear left-foot boots."

"I suppose it would be too much to suggest that you could use your boot cupboard for the purpose for which it was made and bought."

"Then there's the garden," I continued patiently. "Of course a dog and a garden are mutually exclusive."

"Isn't that a clever way of putting it?" said my wife to Hymen.

Hymen curled his tongue slowly round from one corner of his mouth to the other with an air of judicious impartiality and yawned.

"The other day," I proceeded, "I found that he had substituted a chicken bone for six tulips. To begin with, he oughtn't to have chicken bones—"

At this moment Hymen created a diversion by jumping suddenly to his feet, rushing wildly to the door, sniffing at the crack, and letting off a series of impassioned barks.

It is very difficult to disbelieve a dog, tradition having inspired one with an almost imbecile crudity where the species is concerned; accordingly I hastened to the door, looked out, listened in the hall, turned on all the lights, unbolted the front door, and took all the precautionary measures usual in cases of emergency. The servants were at supper, and no man or beast stirred in the house. There was no doubt about it, Hymen had told a deliberate lie.

"It must have been a mouse," observed my wife nervously. "He's a wonderful mouser."

At that, Hymen resumed sniffing with some confidence, then he looked at me out of the corner of his eye to note the effect, and just managed to stop himself from repeating the barking turn. Possibly he was wise, for I was in a dangerous mood. At that moment I was silently formulating a brief summary of his character and his conduct, which culminated in the resolve that he should thenceforth work out his destiny in more sympathetic surroundings than I or my house were prepared to offer. I don't suppose that in all my life I have ever been so determined about anything. I opened my lips to speak.

"Of course," said my wife suddenly, "if you decide to get rid of Hymen I could make no objection. His presence in the house, his very name, must keep you so constantly in mind of that distressing, that irrevocable moment of your life when—" Her soft voice broke and she bent her head to the dog. "Hymen," she whispered pitifully.

With a sudden impulsive gesture I threw myself on my knees before her,

words of comfort and love, even of contrition, trembling on my lips.

Naturally I knelt on the dog.

* * * * * Afterwards—some time afterwards—we sat quite close together with Hymen sleeping self-consciously at our feet.

"And so," whispered my wife, "we will always keep him with us—for better for worse, to remind us of that wonderful day that was blessed by Hymen."

"Amen," I sighed.

MORE NANSENSE.

We have read with interest the stories relating to NANSEN in *The Westminster Gazette*—that of Sir HENRY IRVING, who referred to the great explorer as "the chap who stood the cold so well," followed on the next day by that of the late Duke of DEVONSHIRE, whose first remark to NANSEN on meeting him was, "I suppose you found it pretty cold up there?"

May we, from our own uncertain knowledge, add to these stories, so that the subject may not be allowed to lapse too soon?

Dr. NANSEN was visiting Aberdeen during his lecturing tour. It was January and a blizzard was raging. Outside the railway station he happened to run against his chairman of the night before, who remarked pleasantly, as he picked himself out of the snow: "Chilly for so far south, isn't it?"

An amusing incident took place during Dr. NANSEN's visit to one of our well-known Marquises. The heir to the marquisate, then a little boy of seven summers, was told by his mother to come and speak to the intrepid voyager. "Is his nose frost-bitten, Mummy dear?" asked the handsome child, looking up for a moment from his model gunboat. "Why no, darling," she said. "Then I think I'm rather too busy to see him just now," was the reply.

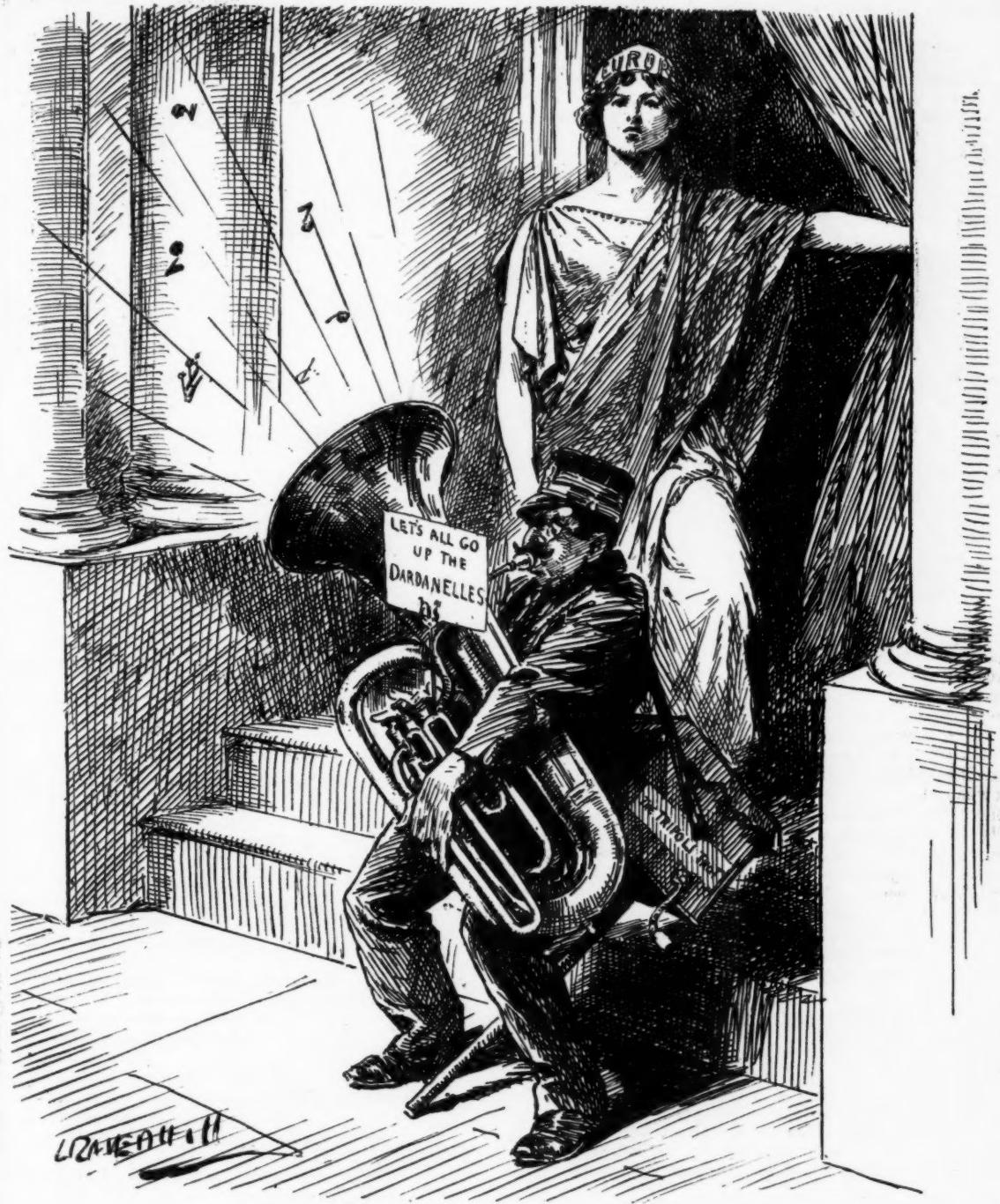
From a circular on the food values of nuts:

"Read also 'The Ideal Diet.' Euthanasia, indeed, to pass away surrounded by gentle cobnuts and with one's favourite Barcelona at one's knee."

Modesty at Carmelite House.

"After all Victor Hugo was a far greater man than most of us."—*Daily Mail*.

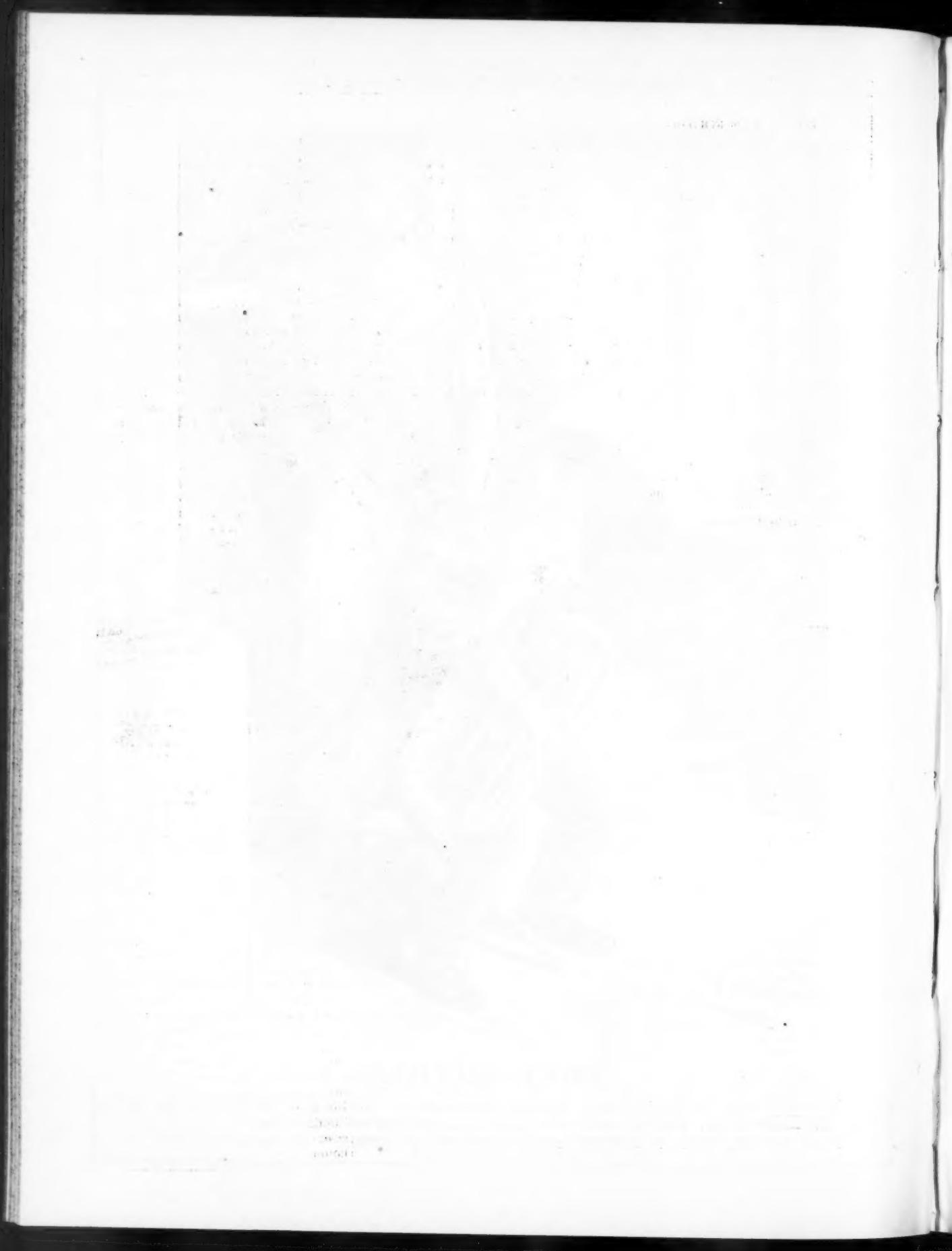
"And that recalls the curious combination of 'harp, violin, bassoon' in the band of musicians at the dance in Tennyson's *Maud*."—*Spectator*. There must have been a little rift with in the flute which led to this substitution of the harp.



SHOCK TACTICS.

EUROPA (*to Italy, who has temporarily discarded the barrel-organ in favour of the bombardon*). "IF YOU GO ON LIKE THAT, YOUNG MAN, YOU'LL GET YOURSELF DISLIKED."

ITALY. "WELL, THAT'S BETTER THAN NOT BEING NOTICED AT ALL."





Relived Cricket Veteran (in whom the old passion has suddenly revived with the opening of the cricket season). "WOA! WOA!! WOA!!! THIS IS ABSURD; TOO MANY IN THE SLIPS. (Seizing caddie.) YOU, BOY, GET ROUND TO SHORT LEG, AND YOU, MID-OFF, COME IN FIVE OR SIX YARDS JUST TO SAVE THE SINGLES."

THE UNFAIRNESS OF IT;
Or, Lines to a Motorist in Spring.

If through the icy mask of that disdain
That leaves me in a cloud of odorous dust
I could despatch some signal to your brain,
Could puncture your conceit and hear it bust;

Or if some second-sight enabled you
To learn the secret workings of a mind
In one so awe-struck to the outer view,
Cringing before your tempest, stunned and blind,

I were content. I do not carp at all
Because you gaze at me, as some calm god,
Holding creation in his dreadful thrall,
Might gaze upon a beetle. I am odd.

I like to walk abroad and sniff the air
Fraught with the scent of all the flowers of May;
Poets (perhaps you chanced to see my hair)
Are sometimes taken in this curious way.

I am well used, besides, to have the morn
Hidden by vapours of your home, the Pit,
And hear the blackbird silenced by a horn
Shouting some happy stave of street-worn wit.

But what I do complain of is the fact
That you can spout the spume of your contempt
Over my dumb form like a cataract,
But mine for you remains unguessed, undreamt.

I have no power to show what kind of bug,
What vermin, I esteem you: how you taint
The blessed hedgerows like a poison-drug
Till the rats sicken and the toads turn faint.

How in the witches' broth (*cf. Macbeth*)
Was no ingredient mingled by their art
So utterly abhorred, so kin to death,
As you and your confounded petrol-cart.

How for the wealth of palaces of Ind
I would not sit beside you in that hearse,
Would sooner by a lot be scalped and skinned,
Or write no other line of deathless verse,

Than thus pollute the glories of the Spring;
That is the point of view you cannot see,
Thinoceros! thrice-epithetted thing!
And yet you deem me envious. Earthworm! flea!

Blind to all beauty, flattered by your fuss,
Mere reveller in the pride and pomp of pelf,
I know you, for I feel exactly thus
When travelling in a motor-car myself. EVOE.

"In writing of the chance of Mushroom I was made to say, 'No horse has won two City and Suburbans.' I presume that every schoolboy has heard of the exploits of Dean Swift in connection w.th this famous handicap. The sentence should have read, 'No horse at four years old has won two City and Suburbans.'" —*Daily Telegraph*.

A nasty one for the clever people who thought they'd caught "Hotspur" napping.

BACK AGAIN.

(Communicated by a Returner.)

We got home all right from Paris, but we had to rush about a lot with crowds of other people all rushing about and fighting for seats. Dad says he's an old traveller and he got it all planned out days before, but he wasn't a bit calm when we got to Calais; and when he found the boat was already packed full and none of us could get a chair to sit upon he said some very angry things about railway companies and the Channel. A very polite gentleman gave up his chair to Mum, and we three sat on the deck and hoped we weren't going to be sea-sick, which we weren't; but when we got half-way over Peggy said she thought her nose was getting red at the tip—it isn't a real tip, because it's so round—and she asked Dad if that was a bad sign, but he said, No; if it got pale that would be a bad sign. After that we all rubbed our noses a good deal to keep them from going pale, and it was very successful.

It was very jolly getting home. John was standing on the doorstep, and he kissed us all in a great hurry because he wanted to see what presents we'd brought him from Paris. He never stopped asking about them till we fished them all out of our luggage, and then he was very happy; but he didn't care a bit about what we'd done in Paris. We tried to tell him about the Louvre and Versailles and the *Cuirassiers*, but it wasn't any good. He wouldn't listen to us, and went on playing with his toys and telling us how he'd fallen down in the garden that afternoon and cut his knee and not cried. It was a good thing we didn't take him to Paris, because it wouldn't have interested him. Mademoiselle had taught him a little French welcome to say to us when we came back, but he forgot all about it. Mum says he's the most unsentimental boy she ever met.

Then there were the dogs and the cats. The dogs were much more pleased to see us than John was. Duke and Lufra, the Great Danes, pranced round us and then began pulling one another about, and then they dashed into the house and slipped up on all the loose carpets and upset everything, and then they dashed out again and raced round and round the lawn in circles with their tails tucked in in the funny way dogs do when they're excited; and Su-Ti, the Pekinese, rushed after them as hard as his little legs would carry him, barking like mad, and then most of us got knocked down, and they licked our faces, which is a great pleasure for dogs. I thought Su-Ti would never stop screaming for joy when he first saw us. He's a very well-bred dog—I mean his pedigree—and most of him is as black as soot. That's how he got his name.

The cats were much quieter than the dogs. They didn't look as if they had noticed we'd been away, but they sat and blinked at us, and didn't even rub up against our legs. They seemed to be saying they weren't going to make fools

of themselves like the dogs. Dad says there's a deep well of affection in a cat's heart, but Mum says it's only milk and fish.

There was a tremendous heap of letters for Dad, and we all helped him to open them. Some of them were the sort that come in long envelopes with half-penny stamps, and they went straight into the waste-paper basket; but every now and then there was a cheque, and Dad called it an oasis or something of that kind, and we all shouted Hurrah! when we got one of that sort, because cheques pay for things, and Dad said all his money was gone because of Paris and the workhouse was looming in front of us. The workhouse always looms when Mum asks for money for the bills. Dad also said that most of his best letters had been kept at home and only the stupid ones forwarded, and it was always the same when he went away anywhere.

We'd bought presents for all the servants, and when we'd finished with the dogs we went and saw them all and gave them what we'd got. James the butler's present was a fountain pen, and the footman's was a little leather purse, and the cook's was a big necklace of beads, pink and light blue. The housemaids got a silk scarf each. They all seemed very pleased when we told them they were real French things bought in Paris—but cook gave us all a hug and said she'd been dreadfully dull without us, and the best present she could have was seeing us all back again, though we were such mischievous plagues she sometimes had to turn us out, but we mustn't mind because it was only her way and she was too old to change now. So we all hugged her back, and told her that getting home was even jollier than going away. Then she gave us a jam-tart each.

Bed was beautiful. We really did want to go, and it was so comfortable, and the night was so quiet without the motor-

omnibuses and the taxi-cabs that we went off to sleep directly. And the next morning there was fried sole and bacon and eggs for breakfast. We never knew we liked them so much.

The Bridge of Allan Gazette, in a complimentary paragraph upon a gentleman who has apparently taken up some new editorial labours, makes the following remarks :—

"He is a successful story writer himself, serials from his pen having appeared in *The People's Journal*, *The Weekly Record*, *The Liverpool Post*, and other popular newspapers, and on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief he should be able to enlist the services of capable authors."

These sweeping and, no doubt, baseless insinuations of plagiarism are greatly to be deprecated.

"On more than one occasion he was within an ace of being boiled and eaten by native chefs."—*Daily News*.

In this country the chef has to confine his activities to the kitchen; he never joins the guests in the dining-room.



"LUMME! I BET 'E GOES FROUGH SOMEFINK WHEN 'E 'AS A 'EADACHE!"

THE BIGLEY PAPERS.

[With acknowledgments to Mr. G. W. SMALLEY's "Anglo-American Memories," Second Series (DUCKWORTH).]

IT is not necessary to introduce Mr. Bigley to English readers, for he is as well known on this as on the other side of the Atlantic. A veritable Nestor of journalists, he has known everybody worth knowing, and as he is gifted with an extraordinarily retentive memory it goes without saying that his book is packed with those racy personalia which are the very life-blood of reminiscence.

Above all Mr. Bigley has the saving grace of not being afraid to recount anecdotes at his own expense. What, for instance, could be more charming than the instance which he gives of the ready wit of the late ABRAHAM HAYWARD. HAYWARD was rallying him on his social activities and Mr. Bigley assured him that he was quite mistaken—that the only form of entertainment he really cared about was a "small and early." "Oh!" replied HAYWARD, "I thought it was 'an Earl and Bigley.'" In this context one may also note a characteristic anecdote of ROBERT BROWNING. The famous poet was challenged to find rhymes for all the company at a country house party given by the Duke of Doldrum, and, when it came to the turn of the narrator, improvised the following couplet:—

Worms when they are most wriggly
Remind me of Mr. Bigley.

Though partial to entertainments on a restricted scale, Mr. Bigley admits that on one occasion he dined out eight times in one week. The eighth dinner was accounted for in the following interesting manner. It appears that he went by mistake to Sir Parry Gorwick's, but did not discover that he had come to the wrong house until he had reached the *entrée*. He then hurried off to Lord Primbury's, next door, in time for the fish, as Lord Primbury's dinner had begun a quarter of an hour later.

The famous saying, *Cherchez la femme*, receives abundant illustration in Mr. Bigley's chatty pages, and he expresses the opinion that Mr. BALFOUR's resignation of the leadership was solely due to the remark of a lady, in a mixed foursome at North Berwick, that a man who talked psychology on the links could never become a scratch player. Mr. Bigley, we may add, confirms the statement that even in the most trying circumstances Mr. BALFOUR uses no stronger expletive than "Blow!" The GERMAN EMPEROR, it is interesting to learn, is greatly addicted to the pic-



Tactless Friend (to sombre artist, who is taking home his rejected works from the R.A.).
"YOU ONLY SENT THREE, I SUPPOSE!"

turesque exclamation, "Dash my imperial buttons!"

Another of Mr. Bigley's heroes is Senator SMITH, of whom he relates several anecdotes, showing that his desire for precise information was developed in early youth. Mr. Bigley made the acquaintance of the Senator when he was only ten years old. Even at that age, we are told, he had the same clear notion of what he wanted and how to get it, which has distinguished him ever since.

"At breakfast I remember his asking his mother if the salt was kept in the cellar, and what butter was made of. She told me also that on a recent yachting trip he had climbed up to the crow's nest to see if crows laid their

eggs there, and was bitterly disappointed to find that the donkey-engine was not worked by an ass."

The Right Men in the Right Place.

"About twelve o'clock smoke was noticed to be rising from a field on the far side of the Park. The ranger, P.C. Drew, went at once to the spot and found the long grass blazing furiously, the flames, fanned by the breeze, spreading with amazing rapidity. With the assistance of Sergeant Hellwell and Acting-Sergeant Howley the fire was eventually stamped out, but not before about an acre had been burnt."

Bradford Daily Telegraph.

The police, it has often been noticed, have always been ready for an emergency like this. An acre would be nothing to three of them.

MY SECRETARY.

WHEN, five years ago, I used to write long letters to Margery, for some reason or other she never wrote back. To save her face I had to answer the letters myself—a tedious business. Still, I must admit that the warmth and geniality of the replies gave me a certain standing with my friends, who had not looked for me to be so popular. After some months, however, pride stepped in. One cannot pour out letter after letter to a lady without any acknowledgments save from oneself. And when even my own acknowledgments began to lose their first warmth—when, for instance, I answered four pages about my new pianola with the curt reminder that I was learning to walk and couldn't be bothered with music, why, then at last I saw that a correspondence so one-sided would have to come to an end. I wrote a farewell letter and replied to it with tears

But, bless you, that was nearly five years ago. Each morning now, among the usual pile of notes on my plate from duchesses, publishers, money-lenders, actor-managers and what-not, I find, likely enough, an envelope in Margery's own handwriting. Not only is my address printed upon it legibly, but there are also such extra directions to the postman as "England" and "Important" for its more speedy arrival. And inside—well, I give you the last but seven.

"MY DEAR UNCLE I thot you wher coming to see me to night but you didnt why didnt you baby has p t o hurt her knee isnt that a pity I have some new toys isnt that jolly we didnt have our five minutes so will you krite to me and tell me all about p t o your work from your loving little MARGIE."

I always think that footnotes to a letter are a mistake, but there are one or two things I should like to explain.

(a) Just as some journalists feel that without the word "economic" a leading article lacks tone, so Margery feels, and I agree with her, that a certain *cachet* is lent to a letter by a p.t.o. at the bottom of each page.

(b) There are lots of grown-up people who think that "write" is spelt "rite." Margery knows that this is not so. She knows that there is a silent letter in front of the "r," which doesn't do anything but likes to be there. Obviously, if nobody is going to take any notice of this extra letter, it doesn't much matter what it is. Margery happened to want to make a "k" just then; at a pinch it could be as silent as a "w." You will please, therefore, regard the "k" in "krite" as absolutely noiseless.

(c) Both Margery and BERNARD SHAW prefer to leave out the apostrophe in writing such words as "isn't" and "don't."

(d) Years ago I claimed the privilege to monopolise, on the occasional evenings when I was there, Margery's last ten minutes before she goes back to some heaven of her own each night. This privilege was granted; it being felt, no doubt, that she owed me some compensation for my early secretarial work on her behalf. We used to spend the ten minutes in listening to my telling a fairy story, always the same one. One day the authorities stepped in and announced that in future the ten minutes would be reduced to five. The procedure seemed to me absolutely illegal (and I should like to bring an action against somebody) but it certainly did put the lid on my fairy story, of which I was getting more than a little tired.

"Tell me about Beauty and the Beast," said Margery as usual, that evening.

"There's not time," I said. "We've only five minutes to-night."

"Oh! Then tell me all the work you've done to-day."

(A little unkind, you'll agree, but you know what relations are.)

And so now I have to cram the record of my day's work into five breathless minutes. You will understand what bare justice I can do to it in the time.

I am sorry that these footnotes have grown so big; let us leave them and return to the letter. There are many ways of answering such a letter. One might say, "MY DEAR MARGERY,—It was jolly to get a real letter from you at last—" but the "at last" would seem rather tactless considering what had passed years before. Or one might say, "MY DEAR MARGERY,—Thank you for your jolly letter. I am so sorry about baby's knee and so glad about your toys. Perhaps if you gave one of the toys to baby, then her knee —" But I feel sure that Margery would expect me to do better than that.

In the particular case of this last letter but seven I wrote:

"DEAREST MARGERY,—Thank you for your sweet letter. I had a very busy day at the office or I would have come to see you. P.T.O.—I hope to be down next week and then I will tell you all about my work; but I have a lot more to do now, and so I must say Good-bye. Your loving UNCLE."

There is perhaps nothing in that which demands an immediate answer, but with businesslike promptitude Margery replied:

"MY DEAR UNCLE thank you for your

letter I am glad you are coming next week baby is quite well now are you p t o coming on Thursday next week or not say yes if you are I am p t o sorry you are working so hard from your loving MARGIE."

I said "Yes," and that I was her loving uncle. It seemed to be then too late for a "P.T.O.," but I got one in and put on the back, "Love to Baby." The answer came by return of post:

"MY DEAR UNCLE thank you for your letter come erly on p t o Thursday come at half past nothing baby sends her love and so do p t o I my rocking horse has a sirrup broken isn't that a pity say yes or no good-bye from your loving MARGIE."

Of course I thanked Baby for her love and gave my decision that it was a pity about the rocking-horse. I did it in large capitals, which (as I ought to have said before) is the means of communication between Margery and her friends. For some reason or other I find printing capitals to be more tiring than the ordinary method of writing.

"MY DEAR UNCLE," wrote Margery—

But we need not go into that. What I want to say is this: I love to get letters, particularly these, but I hate writing them, particularly in capitals. Years ago I used to answer Margery's letters for her. It is now her turn to answer mine for me.

A. A. M.

THE FESTIVE ASH-HUNTERS.

THE last complimentary dinner to the various members of the English team which recovered the ashes has now been eaten just in time for the ill effects of the banqueting season to vanish before the cricket season begins in earnest. They were remarkable affairs in which the richness of the dishes and excellency of the wines were equalled only by the eloquence and fervour of the company.

The public has already had some opportunity of reading accounts of the proceedings at certain of these feasts, notably at that given at Cambridge to JACK HOBBS, where a considerable portion of the evening was occupied in the reading of a letter from Mr. P. F. WARNER, in which, having begun by saying that he had praised Hobbs so consistently and for so many years that he had no more to say, he went on to praise Hobbs. But there are several dinners still to be reported, and we are lucky in being able to report one or two of them.

IREMONGER ENTERTAINED.

IREMONGER was entertained by the Travellers' Club, to which he has just



Little Girl (who has been to church for the first time since measles). "I'M VERY SORRY I WAS SO FIDGETY IN THE SERMON, AUNTY, BUT I'M VERY OUT OF PRACTICE."

been elected under Rule 2, which empowers the committee to add a few distinguished globe-trotters to the list of members every year. The chair was taken by Dr. SVEN HEDIN, who read a number of letters from public men in praise of IREMONGER's heroic voyage to Australia and back for no other purpose than sheer love of travel. The Rt. Hon. Mr. JAMES BRYCE sent a special cablegram of felicitations, and there were also a few choice words from Mr. WARNER, who had hoped to be there but was too busy correcting the proofs of his history of the recent cricket tour in the Antipodes. Mr. WARNER commented gracefully upon the happy chance for the recent English team in having so sterling a fellow as IREMONGER on the same boat and in the same hotels. Mr. DOUGLAS, who also wrote, said something very similar, but added that he wished that IREMONGER had told him that he was a cricketer, as he badly wanted an extra man when playing Thirty-two of Dingamooloo. As it was, however, he found another Englishman named KINNEIN, a left-hander, quite decent in his way, and so pulled through.

IREMONGER, in response to the drinking of his health, made a few modest remarks to the effect that travel to be really enjoyable should be an end in itself rather than a means to an end. Australia is a delightful country to anyone with plenty of time to look about him. (Sensation).

DINING VINE.

The dinner to JOE VINE, the "Sussex Whirlwind" as he has been aptly called by Sir HOME GORDON, the *doyen* of baronet cricket-paragraphists, was held at Brighton in the Dome, no other building being large enough to hold his numerous admirers. In the absence of the Jam of NAWANAGAR, the chair was taken by Mr. CHAPLIN, the Sussex Captain.

Mr. WARNER, who was to have been present, but was unavoidably detained at his barber's, sent a telegram of regret in which he said that, ready as he was with his pen on most occasions, words failed him when it came to the brilliance of JOE VINE, the scorer's friend *par excellence*. No matter what time of day VINE went in, the scorers could have their hard-earned nap.

(Cheers.) That's what he (Mr. WARNER) called sympathy *in excelsis*. (More cheers.) VINE was a born lover of cricket. He liked everything about it; but most of all he liked the batting crease. He liked it so much that he hated to leave it. (Loud applause.) If he had his way VINE should always be the twelfth man in every eleven. (Great enthusiasm during which VINE's health was drunk to slow music.)

Mr. J. W. H. T. DOUGLAS also wrote saying that VINE was by far the best man Sussex had contributed to the conquering team. Nothing but the necessity of getting back to England in 1913, in time for the Triangular Test Matches, prevented him from going in first with VINE every time. (Loud cheers.) He had only one criticism to make of VINE's play, and that was that he wanted more initials. (Applause.)

VINE in reply said that he had always loved cricket and always done his best. He might not be a JESSOR (Cries of "Oh! Oh!") but he had always done his best (loud cheers) and always should—however long it took him. (Sympathetic applause.)



ART NEWS.

REMBRANDT BROWN'S PICTURE, "MIDNIGHT IN THE FOREST," IF NOT EXACTLY THE PICTURE OF THE YEAR, AT LEAST HAS THE MERIT OF BEING BY FAR THE BEST LOOKING-GLASS IN THE ACADEMY.

GANYMEDES TO ORDER.

The London County Council announces the opening of a school where boys will be taught the mysteries of waiting at table. This will include training in all branches of restaurant-craft, and possibly also instruction in Italian patois (so useful in torturing to the wine-waiter) and menu-French, though these are not specifically mentioned in the curriculum.]

HITHERTO Waiting has been regarded merely as a bad habit. This step of the L.C.C.'s is confidently expected by optimists to secure its recognition as a full-blown art, too long cradled in its infancy. Some idea, therefore, of the advances possible in the near future may be gathered from the following examination-paper, drawn up by an expert. The more advanced students of the new school will of course make light of such problems as these:—

(1) Give the derivation and English pronunciation of the following expressions: "Sorrisor, beefisoff"; "Two-lumpsandmilkssir?"; "Yessir." Indicate the inflection (jaunty or pathetic) given to the last of these when replying to—

(a) A request for a Jeroboam of champagne;

(b) An order for a sandwich and a glass of water;

(c) A demand that the band should cease;

(d) A desire for change out of a threepenny-bit.

(2) What would be your course of procedure when, intentionally or accidentally, you have spilt a sauce-boatful of mayonnaise—

(a) On the cloth?

(b) Into a flower-vase?

(c) Down the back of a male customer?

(d) Down the back of a female customer?

(e) Down the back of an infant customer?

(f) Over a toy pom?

(3) Describe the attitude you would adopt in the event of customers addressing you as follows:—

(a) "I want something to eat";

(b) "What's this you've given me?"

(c) "I ordered those oysters more than half-an-hour ago. Haven't you caught them yet?"

(4) Indicate what degree of amusement, if any, you should exhibit at the following remarks:—

(a) "Is this a Noah's Ark chicken?"

(b) "Have you a cheaper cigar than this?"

(c) "Do you call these things *hors d'œuvre* because nobody will employ them?"

(d) "Please bring me a dumb-waiter."

"What has happened is best conveyed by quoting the receipts for the sales of grease. These bear testimony to the use of the brains of its sewage engineer."—*Contractor's Record*. This is the sort of thing which has to be explained to the sewage engineer afterwards.

Wales at a Glance.

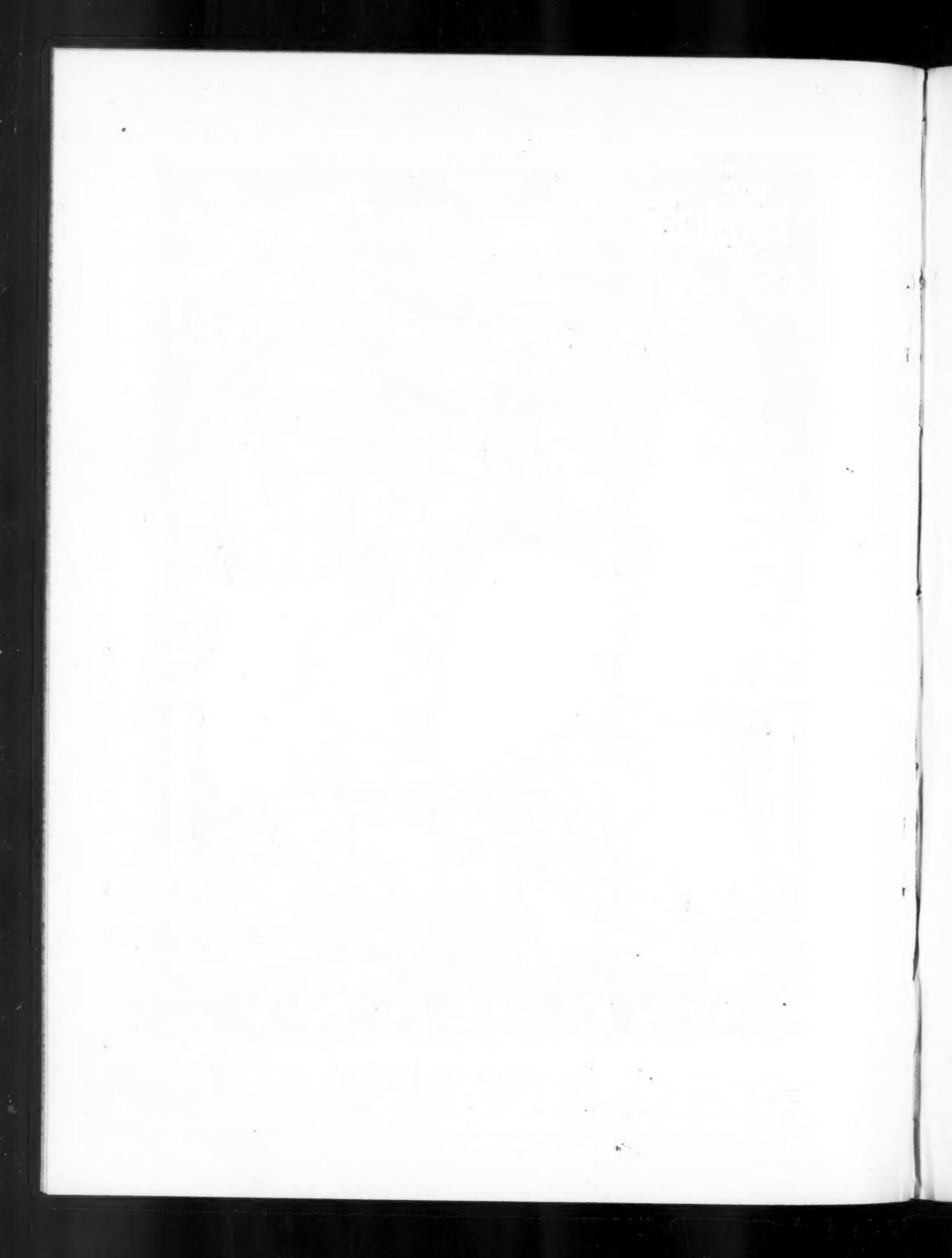
"In Mr. Lloyd George appealing so eloquently to the House of Commons one saw and heard Wales incarnate and articulat."—*The Daily Chronicle*.

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—MAY 1, 1912.



REDMONDUS REX.

(Design for the Irish Penny Postage Stamp.)





Claude Duval McKenna (to Welsh victim). "ROBBING YOU! WHY, I'M LETTING YOU KEEP SIX-AND-EIGHTPENCE IN THE POUND."

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

(EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.)

House of Lords, Monday, April 22.— Noble Lords, after Easter Recess of length inadequate to occasion, returned to scene of patriotic labours. Commons being duller than usual, thought I would look in and humbly share exhilarating atmosphere of the other Chamber. Entering on stroke of half-past four, when public business commences, found the place absolutely tenantless, save that on Woolsack sat LORD CHANCELLOR in animated conversation with his predecessor. Fancy they were comparing notes of appointments to magisterial Bench, with commentary on the unreasonable attitude assumed by interfering, ignorant, irresponsible Public.

Business of sitting entirely military. First order, second reading of Army Annual Bill. At four-thirty enter my Lord Viscount MORLEY. What did he do in this war galley? LANSDOWNE immediately following, mystery partly explained. LEADER OF OPPOSITION, leaning over Table, murmured inaudible remark. MORLEY, rising, read passage from paper brought with him. From stray word caught here and there gathered he was replying to question

about awkward situation recently created in the Dardanelles.

By this time quite a dozen peers had strolled in. NAPOLEON B. HALDANE rose to move second reading of his Bill. Now at last we were in for it. Remember days of old in the Commons when he daily reeled off speech in reply to a question, talked for an hour, sometimes two, when submitting a Resolution or moving stage of a Bill. Alack, House of Lords has proved the St. Helena of our NAPOLEON B. Never been same man since he went into exile. To-day positively moved second reading of Army Bill in a sentence! Before we knew where we were the stage was passed.

Here sitting might have ended but for Lord SAYE AND SELE. In his name (which always suggests attesting a will or other legal document) there stood on paper a conundrum addressed to SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR. Propounded the query, "How does he propose to deal with the National Reserve in case of National Emergency?" What followed illustrates marked difference between Lords' and Commons' procedure in matter of cross-examining Ministers. In latter House a question must strictly preserve interrogative form. Lapse

into anything approaching a speech would be met by angry cries of "Order!" emphasised by rebuke from Chair. In the Lords a Peer has merely to put down question on the paper and is at liberty to enlarge its borders to fullest proportions of a speech, frequently leading to long debate. Thus SAYE AND SELE said and sealed, so to speak, a lengthy disquisition on condition of Territorial Army, bringing up HALDANE with speech in reply.

Little bit of stage management, which deserved a larger gathering in front of curtain, gave peculiar effect to episode. SAYE AND SELE, rising from back Bench on Ministerial side, found that, with exception of two Ministers on Front Bench, he had the long red-cushioned range all to himself. Radiance of rare Spring sunlight shone through windows richly dight. At one particular spot a shaft shooting across through sheet of plain glass fell on the corner seat by Gangway above which the presence of white-lawned Bishops occasionally lends atmosphere of simplicity and purity. Here SAYE AND SELE stood. Whilst he spoke the shaft of light fell full upon head and countenance with what is known on other stages as limelight effect. Little manœuvre so successful that it is likely to be imitated. Only it

requires certain concatenation of circumstances not regularly recurrent.

Business done.—Lords sat for twenty minutes. In Commons announcement made of appointment of Board to inquire into disaster to *Titanic*.

House of Commons, Tuesday.—Long time since Opposition were in such merry mood. The more notable since circumstances of moment don't seem calculated to inspire mirth. Order of day, Bill for Disestablishing and Disendowing Welsh Church.

Chief mourners seated in Peers' Gallery. The portly Primate over the clock; Bishops of St. ASAPH and St. DAVIDS weeping apart. Bishop of HEREFORD on back bench successfully mastered emotion. Amid throng in Strangers' Gallery gleam many white neckcloths. Actually a solemn occasion. Perhaps, after all, the laughter which frequently interrupted HOME SECRETARY's speech was hysterical, testifying rather to deep emotion than to high spirits.

Cousin Hugh went off at half-cock. McKENNA scarcely started on exposition of Bill when he remarked, "The Right Honourable Gentleman is misstating the facts."

One so familiar with the Athanasian Creed might have been able to put the assertion in briefer form. This, however, the Parliamentary way of phrasing it. Nevertheless, SPEAKER sharply interposed with suggestion that "It would be better if the Noble Lord permitted the HOME SECRETARY to proceed." This he did for a few sentences. Again interrupted with flat contradiction met by storm of objurgation from Ministerial side.

Effect upon BROTHER BOB, seated on corner of fourth Bench above Gangway, electrical. Popped up and down on seat with rhythm and alacrity that would have created feeling of envy in bosom of SWIFT MACNEILL had he been present. Through some anxious moments there seemed prospect of House being temporarily deprived of presence and counsel of the CECILS owing to Lord ROBERT and Lord HUGH being "named." Pulled themselves up just in time. Without other interruption than bursts of mocking laughter and ironical cheers from gentlemen opposite, HOME SECRETARY went on demonstrating to delight of thirty-one Welsh Members out of thirty-four, how sweet

are the uses of adversity when in case of a Church they decree Disestablishment and Disendowment.

MCKENNA took especial pride in generosity of measure. As he repeatedly insisted, while taking a full sovereign from the Welsh Church, the Bill did not leave it comfortless. It nobly pressed on its acceptance six-and-eightpence.

Business done.—Welsh Church Disestablishment Bill brought in.

Thursday.—By way of Supplemen-

State. True when, as not infrequently happens, he has half-a-dozen Questions on printed paper, he is master of situation. Like the Wedding Guest stopped by the Ancient Mariner, the House in such circumstances "cannot choose but hear." It is in matter of Supplementary Questions that WINTERTON, GILBERT PARKER and other of his devoted followers are jealous on his behalf.

Take, for example, debate sprung, at Question time the other day, upon PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF TRADE. It appropriated an appreciable portion of period set apart for Questions of which due notice had been given. It filled a column-and-a-half of next morning's Parliamentary Report. No fewer than twenty-four so-called Supplementary Questions were hurled at the Minister; and KINLOCH-COOKE did not get in one.

Failure not consequent on lack of effort. As each inquisitor, after speeding his dart, resumed his seat, K.-C. slowly rose, fixed his pince-nez preliminary to reading Question scribbled on Order of the Day, when, lo! he found another Member had been called by the SPEAKER. Six times repeated, or even four, this slow rising and swift recoil would be embarrassing. But think of 24 times. And just as everyone had had his turn and K.-C. was sole competitor for SPEAKER's eye, the right honourable owner suggested that perhaps the matter had gone far enough and called on next Question on paper. This may, of course, have been pure accident. Among group alluded to there is disposition to resent it.

What does the poet say?

Alas for him who may not ask,
But dies with all his questions in him.

Business done.—Welsh Disestablishment Bill read a first time by 331 votes against 253.

"A cameo, exact in historical detail, from June 15, 1818, the eve of Quatre Bras."

Standard.

Not too pedantically exact, however.

"For sale, or exchange, an infantry officer's frock coat, bought by Territorial officer in error; exchange rabbits, Angora."—*Exchange and Mart*. If the Territorial really wanted rabbits and got the frock coat by mistake, the case is a bad one.



The Damaged One (entering Gas Company's office). "PLEASE, GUV'NOR, MISSUS 'TEED A COOKER LAST WEEK AN' WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO TELL US 'OW WE STAND? I SUPPOSIN' WE WAS TO 'AVE A LITTLE BLOW-UP—ONLY SUPPOSIN', Y'KNOW—A SMASH AN' THE SUNDAY DINNER GONE, OR THE MISSUS 'URT, OO WOULD 'AVE TO MAKE THINGS GOOD?—STAND THE RACKET, IN A MANNER O' SPEAKIN'—ONLY JUST SUPPOSIN', LIKE."

tary Question KINLOCH-COOKE got in a nasty one for LORD-LIEUTENANT. Wanted to know whether it is not true that His Excellency went about Dublin trying to peddle surplus fruit from viceregal gardens, and was rebuffed by the Trade?

"A question both ungentlemanly and undeserved," remarked FLAVIN.

And the SPEAKER ignored K.-C.'s appeal to rule him out of order.

Growing opinion of group of Members who sit at feet of KINLOCH-COOKE at Gangway-end behind Front Opposition Bench that their esteemed Chief is unduly hampered in pursuit of information undertaken on behalf of the



MARGINAL NOTES ON HISTORY.

JOY OF PEASANTS AT HEARING MAGNA CHARTA READ TO THEM IN THE ORIGINAL LATIN.

A FLY ON THE LINE.

I DON'T think I observed the fly before the train stopped for the third time at Messington Junction. But as soon as I did I perceived that there was something unusual about him. He was crawling steadily along the "six-foot," and above his head were hovering two other flies. I have forgotten how many hundred facets the eye of a fly has, but I know that indomitable purpose and iron resolution were written upon every single facet of each of this one's, and in a moment I realised what he was doing. He was racing the train for a wager, and the other two flies were referees, to prevent him from taking an unfair advantage by using his wings.

Now I do not wish this little narrative to be disbelieved, and so I frankly admit that the train (although it was a "through" train on the Great West Central Railway, during the fourth stage of "strike" runnings) travelled considerably faster between the stations than the fly. But the train stopped for a long time at every station, and it also stopped three times at every station. It was a very long train. It was almost as long as one of Mr. MASEFIELD's poems in *The English Review*. And first of all it exhibited the engine and

some of its carriages to the people waiting on the platform, and then its middle and then its tail. It reminded me of the Chimæra. It reminded me of all Gaul. It reminded me of essence of wormwood. And of course during these stoppages the fly had its chance of making up lost ground. It was the old story of the hare and the tortoise, though any hare that had not been jugged would have had the legs of my train. It was while we lay at anchor off Toadworthy that the fly first showed signs of flagging. And, fortunately, it was at Toadworthy also that the man with the bag of biscuits and the bottle of ginger-beer moved into the last available space in my corridor. As he had started the day before from Palmerston, which is over eighty miles distant, and there was no refreshment car on the train, he was somewhat hungry; but all the same I begged a few crumbs of biscuit and some drops of ginger-beer from him, and baited the fly out of the carriage window. The gallant creature was evidently re-invigorated and made a splendid spurt. His legs were going about thirty-two to the minute, but five was getting a trifle late. By this time he was naturally an object of considerable interest to all the passengers on his side of the train, and necks were everywhere being craned

out of the windows and bets were being laid on him. I still think he would have won had it not been for the down-slope which begins just after Poppicombe and Mortleigh. In taking a down-slope the Great West Central Railway, even during a coal-strike, is second to none in verve and sprightliness, and whilst we were still some twelve miles from Ditchwater, he threw up the sponge. We all took off our hats and gave him a rousing cheer as he faded away slowly in the distance behind us. It was a foolhardy but heroic effort, and our English hearts went out to him.

The moral of this true anecdote is of course that we are very glad that the coal-strike is now over, and we hope that the Great West Central Railway will soon get to hear about it.

"What is the meaning of the X on the brewer's barrel?" asked a curious questioner at the lunch table. And the frivolous replier said that it was the first syllable of "excellent."

"*The Daily Chronicle's* Office Window.

We cannot say if the above conversation was inspired by a recent picture in *Punch* representing a gentleman in a public-house with XXX in compromising laundry-marks on his white waistcoat; but, if so, we are very glad, as we always are, to have been the innocent cause of humour in others.

A STRAIGHT TIP.

DEAR MR. PUNCH.—In view of the approach of my Wedding Day, I have made out a list of things *I really want*, the receipt of which will undoubtedly awaken in me a high sense of Festival and of Bliss; and in order to prevent misunderstandings I have also prepared a list of things that I particularly *do not want*. Finally, as a special safeguard against reduplication of gifts, I have drawn up an *ordre du jour* for the use of the Pepper-pot and Nut-pick Brigade. Kindly publish and oblige,

Yours receptively,
WILLIAM SNATCHER.

P.S.—I should mention that my car is a "Dart" five years old, and that I hope (all well, and circumstances permitting, etc., etc.) to make a wedding tour in her.

A.—THINGS I REALLY WANT.

One cigar-lighter.

Do. grape scissors.

Do. asparagus tongs.

(In regard to the above see *ordre du jour* below.)

Left-off clothing and rags of all kinds.

Cap for oil-can screwed $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Strip of brass, bent the other way round. (Particulars on application.)

Cheque.

A dozen boxes of "Flyaway" golf-balls.

New back axle, complete.

Luggage-strap, 27 feet long and 3 inches wide.

Two first-class season tickets between Reigate and London.

A really good garden roller.

Four spare valve springs.

Another cheque.

My tailor's bill in full—receipted.

400-gallon cylinder of petrol.

A wedding ring (for size, apply to Miss Lala P. Woosnap, Suffolk Hotel, Bayswater Road).

Two more cheques.

Soldering outfit (*not* to be "Master Tommy's Giant Soldering Card").

Umbrellas are always acceptable as I lose them, and if boots are given they should be large-fitting nines, with medium toes.

B.—THINGS I PARTICULARLY DO NOT WANT.

Seventeen cigar-lighters.

Nine-and-twenty grape scissors.

Forty asparagus tongs.

Stuffed kitten mounted as penwiper.

Inkpot exactly reproducing a half-penny bun with a fly on it.

WORDSWORTH's Poems—

(a) Bound in morocco - - half or full.

(b) do. do. calf - - - do. do.

(c) do. do. levant - - - do. do.

(d) do. do. any way - - do. do.

Stand for holding newspaper. (I don't read at meals.)

Candlesticks or lamp. (The house has electric light.)

Chafing dish. (I never chafe.)

Antlers. (I cannot bear them.)

Chatty books on gardens. (I write them.)

C.—ORDRE DU JOUR FOR PEPPER-POT AND NUT-PICK BRIGADE.

(To guard against re-duplication of gifts.)

The Brigade will include all persons enlisted by fate to supply me with salt-cellars, mustard-pots, butter-dishes, knife-rests, spoon-warmers, napkin-rings, menu-holders, cheese-scoops, chutney-spoons, &c., &c., &c.

(1) The Brigade will muster in the waiting-room of the Universal Stores at two o'clock on the afternoon of May 31st, and units will prepare for action by depositing all impedimenta, except purses, in the cloak-room.

(2) Units will proceed to elect a General of Brigade who will appoint not fewer than ten Section Commanders, each of whom will take rank as "Officer in command of Picks," "Officer in command of Mustards," &c., &c.

(3) Units will then rally to their respective commanders, who will ascertain the highest price offered by any unit in his section, and will then give the word of command as follows: "Pair salts, fourteen-and-six, right about, fifth floor," whereupon that unit will proceed to the position named at the double by the first lift available, and complete purchase. He will then return and exhibit receipted bill to the General of Brigade, and will receive the word of command "Dismiss."

(4) Each Section Commander, after his first unit has gone to the front, will agree for some other gift after consultation with other Sectional Commanders, and will give the word to advance to the highest remaining bidder, until every unit in turn has been sent forward. If any unit, through habit or other mental infirmity, is unable to think of any other gift than his original choice, or one which has been already allotted, that unit will receive the word of command and will forthwith order one of the articles listed above, or, if the list has been exhausted, as many gallons of petrol as his proffered subscription will buy, and the personal taste exercised in that unit's choice will be limited to the colour of the tin. No fractions of a gallon will be bought, but the balance, if any, will be spent on cotton waste.

(5) No cases will be bought, except for solid gold or jewelled goods. Any unit attempting, for instance, to buy a pair of plated saltspoons listed at 3s. 6d. in a shagreen satin-lined case costing seven-and-nine pence, will have his invitation cancelled and his name deleted from the confectioner's list for wedding cake.

TO A SPRING FOX.

Now may you lick your pads in peace
And sleep with your nose in your brush,

Nor fear at morn the note of the horn
Shall spoil the note of the thrush,
For in the gorse the brown bees bumble
And all your little ones squeak and tumble,

Tumble and squeak and rush!

You were the thief that stole the geese
And killed in the russet red,
But you paid the joke when a fox-hound spoke,
And into the wind you fled;

That was the day when you did them rarely,
Raced them level and beat them squarely,

Out of the osier-bed!

But now shall the bristling whimper cease,

The clamorous cry be still,
And you shall turn in the growing fern
And bask on the gorse-clad hill,
Nor cock an ear, when the lark rejoices,
To catch the terrible singing voices

All lifted up to kill!

So you may get your ribs some grease
And go your woodland way,
No hound shall run in the Maytide sun,
No earths be stopped 'ere the day,
When you lie in the owl-light, lith and limber,

Under the oak-tree's ancient timber,
To see the little ones play!

But that the cubs may show increase
And grow to $\frac{1}{2}$ bandits free,
You must cross the vale in the moon-beams pale
And up by the barnyard be,
To pick from the roost (since babes must dine) a

Turkey poult, or a Cochin China,
Or ducklings two and three!

And they shall lick their chops in peace,
The bones and feathers among,
And get them strength and sinuous length,
And brain and leg and lung,
That they may run straight-necked and knowing,

When the woods awake at the horn's far blowing
And towl of a fox-hound's tongue!

THE FREE-FOODER.

THERE was the bell, so I rang it. That is what bells are for—to be rung. That is what I am for—to ring them. I can conceive no other use for a bell and, on a Sunday afternoon when I have my party clothes on, I can conceive no other use for myself. Besides, the Verreys are old friends.

"Yes," I said, when the butler opened the door, "I rang it, and, what is more, if you hadn't come before I had finished counting fifty, I should have rung it again. That is the sort of person I am. So be careful when you answer me. Is Mrs. Verrey at home?"

"Yes, Sir," said the butler, being a man of few words but great dignity. I always feel that my Sunday afternoon bell-ringing has not been wasted to produce such a result.

"Mr. Lawson!" he said, as he ushered me into the drawing-room; not, you observe, "Only Mr. Lawson!"

"Ah," I said, advancing into the room with my best smile, "I am delighted to find you in, but not surprised."

"Why not surprised?" said Mrs. Verrey. One must say something on these occasions.

"Because your butler did not look the sort of man who would tell a lie. In some ways," I continued, sitting down and preparing to make a nuisance of myself for some time—"in some ways it must be tiresome to have a truthful butler."

"Not at all," said Mrs. Verrey; "we are always very glad to see you . . . But to come at once to business—you will take tea, of course?"

"Nothing," I replied, as I took my cup, "was further from my thoughts."

Mr. Verrey is not a social expert. I regret to say that on this occasion he wore a light suit, and said "Liar!" quite audibly.

Later, when he had taken me up to his smoking-room to have a cigarette "before," as he quaintly put it, "you go," he pursued his train of thought. "How one meal leads to another!" he said discursively.

"Tea," I protested, "is not a meal, it is a pastime. Unless you withdraw your horrid innuendo that I came here in search of food and drink alone, I shall go further and say that calling is sometimes a duty."

"You need not have come if you did not want to."

"On the contrary, I was in duty bound to call and thank you for your dinner on Thursday last—ultimo, if you prefer it."

Mr. Verrey, his wife declares, spends his Sundays either sleeping or arguing.



(A Studio in Rome.)

Fair Sitter. "THE HADRIANS' VILLA, NOW! WHEN WOULD BE THE BEST TIME FOR ME TO SEE OVER IT? I MEAN, OF COURSE, WHEN THE FAMILY ARE LIKELY TO BE OUT."

"When the man said Mrs. Verrey was at home, you could easily have said, 'Oh, in that case I will call again.' What I complain of is this—We asked you to dinner the other night . . ."

"Other?" said I. "To me there was only one night, and that was it."

" . . . at a cost to ourselves of (roughly) three-and-sixpence, exclusive of wine. Such expense I incurred knowingly. But it does seem a pity if I can never stand you dinner without having to stand you tea as well. Haven't you any food of your own?"

"Yes, but, to tell you the truth, I like yours better." And I got up to go.

"What I want to know is, where is this going to end?"

"Ah," I said mysteriously, as we walked downstairs together. At this moment an idea occurred to Mr. Verrey for what it was worth.

"That was a very pleasant lunch I had with you at your club the other day," he said. "When may I come and call to thank you?"

I realized that I must be off at once, but I changed my mind when I saw Mrs. Verrey coming across the hall. I did well, for, "You are never going?" she asked; "won't you stay and have some dinner with us?"

If Mr. Verrey thought he had done with me when he turned me out that Sunday night, he never made a greater mistake in his life. On the following Sunday I rang the same bell, with the same happy result. "I have come," I said, advancing into the room with my best smile, "to thank you for the glorious dinner you gave me last Sunday; have come"—I looked severely at Mr. Verrey—"as in duty bound."

AT THE PLAY.

"IMPROPER PETER."

I AM not permitted to see into the recesses of Mr. MONCKTON HOFFE's mind, and so I cannot say what it was that induced him to believe (if he did believe) that his farce at the Garrick was a comedy. He started out, I imagine, to make merry over the embarrassments of a middle-aged gentleman, into whose perfectly honest hands—for the epithet "improper" is only a catchword, applicable to a period prior to the rise of the curtain—has fallen the protection of a solitary female in distress. He then, I further imagine, discovered that the position of this friendless girl, whom a feeble creature had promised to marry "in the sight of Heaven" (Heaven in these cases being treated as slightly myopic), had in it such an element of pitifulness that it would never do to describe the play as a farce. Yet the situation and most of the characters remain farcical, and we are left in doubt of the author's tact in allowing a young girl, in so painful a plight, to be placed in an environment so ludicrous. The stage has made one familiar with this kind of situation, but it is commonly reserved for married women or divorcees, or those, at any rate, who are better able to bear it. Here, such amusement as we may derive from the suspicions thrown upon Peter is dearly bought at the price of harrowing emotions aroused by a helpless girl's predicament. Conscious, perhaps, of this defect in his scheme, the author (assisted by Mr. BOURCHIER in his most unbelievable mood) sought to impart a high gravity to Peter's defence of her and expected us to take it quite seriously; but this defence was almost as laughable as anything in the play, thanks to the absurdity of its *milieu*. The fact is, it is easy enough to introduce comic relief into a serious theme, but the converse process is fraught with appalling difficulties.

One's appreciation of the author's motives, if any, was not greatly helped by the performance of Mr. HERBERT SLEATH in the part of the young man whose elopement with Periwinkle was frustrated by his father's intervention. One gathered subsequently that he was trying to satirize the attitude of an age that has discarded the former frank-

ness of men of the world and embroiders its sins with a specious phraseology; but during much of the First Act one simply concluded that his voice and manner were as wrong as they could be. "You don't understand!" he kept saying—a phrase, by the way, that occurred more than once on other lips. And he was right: I didn't understand.

The scenery was happier than the things that went on inside it. The conversation on deck in the First Act was rather second-rate, and made me wonder whether the Royal Yacht Squadron knew much about Peter's friends when they elected him to their fastidious corporation; and all the business of the liqueurs and the fantastic cast that went with them was

Walter Stancombe on his head; he chose however to do it on his feet, and was inimitable in that position. Mr. BOURCHIER did not seem quite to realize himself in this scene; at times he was in deadly earnest, at others his interest appeared to wander. But he had had a good deal to go through. He had been loath to forego his ancient reputation as the pink of impropriety, but was bound in honour to adopt a parental attitude towards the girl committed to his charge. He had watched his emotions suffering a sea-change into something more sentimental; and, while for the girl's sake he had had to repudiate the base insinuations of his wife, for his own he had privily rejoiced at this excuse for a divorce. In the result I am not sure that his versatility did itself full justice. Miss JULIA JAMES as Periwinkle was rather wooden in her gestures, but perhaps this was right; anyhow she came very well out of a difficult task. Mrs. RALEIGH's nice voice and other attractive gifts were thrown away on the invidious part of the wife. The exchange of national dress and manners, as made between Elliot Hay, U.S.A. (Mr. CAREW) and George Plumley (Mr. WEGUERIN), made a very pleasant diversion in a play which, though it has its good qualities, is not likely to immortalize its author, Mr. HOFFE.



"ONCE ABOARD THE LUGGER AND THE GIRL IS"—SOMEBODY ELSE'S.
 Periwinkle Miss JULIA JAMES.
 Peter Mr. BOURCHIER.
 Charles Mr. SLEATH.

forced. The Second Act showed us the saloon of *The Nut* with a sectional view of the sea. One has of course seen the river in *Das Rheingold* so treated, but I never remember to have had the sea presented to me in this architectural aspect. There was also a fat pinnace permanently fixed and affording a very adroit cover for the arrival and departure of *The Nut's* visitors. The extremely small dimensions of the saloon, which at one time was required to hold almost the entire cast, had the bijou air which one associates with private theatricals.

On the other hand the spacious drawing-room of the Third Act offered ample accommodation for the most incredible Court of Enquiry that was ever conducted, Royal Commissions not excepted. Mr. FRED KERR, who took a leading hand in its manipulation, could have played the part of Sir

when I looked in for an hour or so at Mr. HAMMERSTEIN'S House and refreshed my memory of a couple of the brief and rather foolish *Contes*. I was in time for a few admirable renderings of the popular barcarolle, and once more found Madame VICTORIA FER in great voice as the consumptive *Antonia*. Mr. FRANK POLLOCK was again a delightful figure as *Hoffmann*, and everybody sang and played worthily of the high reputation of the London Opera House for the excellence of its ensemble. O. S.

"Herbert Orient did well to draw 2-2 with Thursday."—*Woolwich Gazette*.
 A good omen for Herbert's great match with Tuesday week.

Things that don't really want
Arranging.

"The Duke and Duchess of Connaught have arranged to make an expensive tour through Canada."—*Glasgow Evening Times*.



*Simple Lifer (who is doing a walking-tour in the hills). "I DON'T EXPECT YOU SEE MANY STRANGERS UP HERE?"
Old Shepherd (reflectively). "WEEL, THERE'S YERSEL' THE DAY, AND THERE WAS ANOTHER TRAMP HEREABOUTS LAST WEEK."*

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

It will, no doubt, be excellent news for the many admirers of *Incomparable Bellairs* that her creators, AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE, have now given to the world certain further adventures of this fascinating lady, in a book called *Love Gilds the Scene* (SMITH, ELDER). I protest 'tis a title vastly well-suited to the matter of the tales, since all of them turn upon some pretty affair of gallantry or tender intrigue. As for the manner of them, because the great quality of eighteenth-century fiction is atmosphere, and this is far more difficult of attainment in a short story than a long, you must not be surprised if they suffer a little from their brevity. But for all that the adventures are excellently entertaining; comedies, light and artificial as the time itself, with scarcely a note graver than the lamentation of some jilted exquisite or the half-serious distress of a fair lady over the fickleness of her lord. And through them the lovely *Kitty Bellairs*, now promoted to *Lady Kilcroney*, takes her elegant and devastating way, string-pulling with all the grace and skill imaginable. Of her exploits, I think I best liked that in which she foiled the plot of a jealous rival, who had purposed that the country bride of *Beau Stafford* (another old friend) should appear at Bath races a figure of fun in green and cherry-colour. How *Kitty Kilcroney* detects this, re-dresses the chit in record time, and winds up her triumph by presenting a blushing beauty to H.R.H., can better be read than described. Certainly you will enjoy it better in that way.

Mr. EDGAR JEPSON is doing for the suburbs even more than Mr. ARNOLD BENNETT has done for the Potteries. Mr. BENNETT makes the Five Towns romantic; Mr. JEPSON makes Chiswick lurid. In the last book of his that I read, Chiswick was enjoying a jolly bout of human sacrifices in the back garden; in *The House on the Mall* (HUTCHINSON) it is suffering from a spasm of murders indoors. I have always held that the only really readable novels of sensation are those written, tongue in cheek, by men capable of better things. *The House on the Mall* goes to strengthen this theory. Even when the blood is pouring its thickest and the thunder rolling its loudest, Mr. JEPSON never loses his distinction. His characters live, even when they are dying violently. The *Marquess of Drysdale*, alias that simultaneous criminal duo, *Paul Manleverer* and *Andrew Rawsley* (he is both of them in turns), is a delightful character, who makes Professor Moriarty, N.O.C. (Napoleon of Crime), seem like a curate. For one moment, in Chapter XXIX., I was afraid that he was about to forget himself and vulgarly murder a guest with a knife; but I was swiftly reassured. Instead, he let him down in a lift into an underground cell beneath the Thames, shut him in and drowned him, like the fine old English gentleman he was. Another acquaintance he disposed of by dropping him into a cellar, the floor of which was a sort of sinister Joy-Wheel, doing—like some South American Republic—its 250 revolutions a minute. Finally, I should like to add that the real EDGAR JEPSON peeps out at intervals throughout the story in some comedy chapters full of excellent dialogue between the only three non-murderous characters in the cast.

A keen sense of humour, an intimate knowledge of Dublin, and an X-ray-like insight into the souls of char-women, policemen, labourers, labourers' wives, young Irish patriots and children, are the qualities which enabled Mr. JAMES STEPHENS to make *The Charwoman's Daughter* (MACMILLAN) the little gem it is. Perhaps it is in his psychological analysis of the policeman that Mr. STEPHENS more particularly excels. The nameless constable whose vast shadow falls on the life of *Mary Makebelieve* will remain in my mind long after I have forgotten many another character in contemporary fiction. Never after this, though I may not agree with *Mary's* mother, the charwoman, who held that "their continual pursuit of and intercourse with criminals tended to deteriorate their moral tone," can I feel quite the same towards the Force. You see, this policeman of *Mary's* was a snob. He courted *Mary* till he found her one day scrubbing the floor of his aunt's house, and then he decided that it would be *infra dig.* for a man of his class to marry her. So he abandoned the idea, and when, on consideration, he decided that he wanted her after all, she had discovered that she did not want him, but preferred *Mrs. Cafferty's* lodger, a young man with a fiery soul and a perpetual hunger which even stir-about could scarcely blunt. Whereupon the policeman violently assaulted the young man, who came home "in a mood of extraordinary happiness" and declared that "he wouldn't have missed it for a pension." It is a very long time indeed since I read such a human, satisfying book. Every page contains some happy phrase or illuminating piece of character-drawing. I particularly enjoyed *Mrs. Cafferty's* bracing treatment for invalids, which involved the co-operation of all her six children and a cat, some to play runaway horses about the room, others to be tigers in a jungle, and two to play the game of bump on the bed, while she herself sat at the side of the bed "telling with a gigantic voice a story wherein her husband's sister figured as the despicable person she was to the eye of discernment."

IT would be impossible to tell the story of *Sharrow* (HUTCHINSON) in a single paragraph; the BARONESS VON HUTTEN has herself taken 379 closely printed pages for the purpose, and none of that is mere verbiage. Indeed, my grievance is that so much happens to *Sandy* before and after he becomes *Lord Sharrow* that his biographer can find no space for comment or digression; and the story, in

its series of short sharp paragraphs, reads too much like a précis to be entirely satisfactory as a novel. Drinks should not be over-watered, but too much spirits should not be taken neat; which brings me back to the story, whose hero, if he had not consumed so much neat brandy, would have married *Viola Wymondham* quite early on and ceased to be of interest. I do not remember having previously watched the averting of an undesired marriage by the process of deliberately intoxicating the lover in the presence of his mistress, and I am not over-anxious to watch it again. But in this instance the brutal thing is so well done and is so much part and parcel of a fine study that it is not only forgivable but legitimate. I advise those in search of a good book to read this one in small doses, closing it from time to time and pausing to deduce for themselves the moral which the clever authoress would no doubt have inserted if only she could have found the room and the time to do so.



Leading Man in Travelling Company. "WE PLAY HAMLET TO-NIGHT, LADDIE, DO WE NOT?"
Sub-Manager. "YES, MR. MONTGOMERY."

Leading Man. "THEN I MUST BORROW THE SUM OF TWO-PENCE!"

Sub-Manager. "WHY!"

Leading Man. "I HAVE FOUR DAYS' GROWTH UPON MY CHIN. ONE CANNOT PLAY HAMLET IN A BEARD!" Sub-Manager. "UM—WELL—WE'LL PUT ON MACBETH!"

chapter I am glad to have read the book. But the story itself did not grip me; one never gets on intimate terms with the characters, and the author as a showman is continually in the front of the picture. The hero, a son of rich but extremely unsatisfactory parents, seems to have stepped out of the back of beyond. He hurries around doing good deeds and distributing money, then he loses everything and becomes practically a beggar-prince, until in the end love and justice are triumphant. This is a first novel and, although I cannot recommend it as a whole, one chapter is worth reading and remembering.

The Cuckoo in Sussex.

SIR.—I think it may interest your readers to know that during a holiday in the heart of Sussex since Easter I have not yet heard the cuckoo. Unhappily I have been rendered stone deaf, at least temporarily, by the singing of the nightingales.

Your obedient Servant,
OBSERVER.